

## Public Health & Social Services Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

**DATE & TIME:** May 6, 2019 – 5:00 PM  
**LOCATION:** K.L. Binder Library, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, C.O.B.  
**PRESIDING OFFICER:** Chairman Craig Lopez  
**LEGISLATIVE STAFF:** Nettie Tomshaw  
**PRESENT:** Legislators Nolan, Collins, Petit, Wawro  
**ABSENT:** None  
**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Legislator Ken Ronk., Marc Rider Deputy County Executive, Smart Approaches To Marijuana Luke Niforatos & Tom Basile, Pat Doxey Daily Freeman, Paul Brooks Times Herald-Record, Tom Kadgen Concerned Citizen

Chairman Lopez called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

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**Motion No. 1:** Moved to Approve the Minutes of the April 1, 2019 meeting

**Motion By:** Legislator Nolan  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Collins  
**Discussion:** None  
**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Lopez, Nolan, Collins, Petit, Wawro (arrived 5:07 PM)  
**Voting Against:** None  
**Votes in Favor:** 5  
**Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** Minutes **APPROVED**

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### Resolutions for the May 21, 2019 Session of the Legislature

**Resolution No. 185:** Approving The Execution Of A Contract In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, Inc. – Department Of Social Services

**Resolution Summary:** This resolution approves the execution of a contract with Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, Inc. for professional foster care services. \$200K - 36% Federal \$72K, 29% State \$58K, 35% County \$70K. Contract term 2/15/2019 – 6/30/2020.

**Motion No. 2:** Moved to Discuss & Adopt Resolution No. 185  
**Motion By:** Legislator Nolan  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Petit

**Discussion:**

Chairman Lopez called upon Deputy County Exec. Marc Rider who provided an overview of this contract. This not-for-profit corporation offers a residential treatment and educational program with therapeutic elements for children age 5 to 15yrs. - from kindergarten through the ninth grade that have moderate to severe emotional and behavioral problems.

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Lopez, Nolan, Collins, Petit, Wawro  
**Voting Against:** None  
**Votes in Favor:** 5  
**Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** Resolution ADOPTED

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**Resolution No. 186:** Approving The Execution Of A Contract Amendment In Excess Of \$50,000.00 Entered Into By The County – Saint Anne Institute – Department Of Social Services

**Resolution Summary:** This resolution approves the execution of a contract amendment #1, with Saint Anne Institute, increasing the not-to-exceed amount for professional foster care services for women ages (12) through (21). Original Amt. \$48K, Amt. Amt. \$152K, Total \$200K - 36% Federal \$72K, 29% State \$58K, 35% County \$70K. Original Term 7/1/2018 – 6/30/2020. Amd. Contract Term 2/1/2019 – 6/30/2020.

**Motion No. 2:** Moved to Discuss & Adopt Resolution No. 186  
**Motion By:** Legislator Petit  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Nolan

**Discussion:**

Chairman Lopez called upon Deputy County Exec. Marc Rider who provided an overview of this contract. The primary objective is to provide quality treatment services to children and families allowing them to return to permanent living environments and community schools, and to decrease the cycle of abuse and victimization.

**Voting In Favor:** Legislators Lopez, Nolan, Collins, Petit, Wawro  
**Voting Against:** None  
**Votes in Favor:** 5  
**Votes Against:** 0  
**Disposition:** Resolution ADOPTED

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## New Business –

Realities of Legal Pot, Preventing Another Big Tobacco, Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM),  
Presenters Luke Niforatos and Tom Basile

- Not-for-profit organization based in Alexandria VA.
- SAM is a coalition of Businesses, Healthcare Professionals, Law Enforcement, and Parents to Protect NY Communities
- SAM takes no money from big tobacco, big pharma or political action committees
- They oppose legalization of recreational marijuana
- Recommends slowing down the process/opt out
- Legal substances cost \$10 for every \$1 in revenue brought in by government
- Societal & fiscal costs far outweigh projected marijuana tax revenues
- In legalized states revenues do not pay for treatment costs or costs due to car crashes & other impacts
- SAM is in favor of decriminalization
- Tobacco industry is the model for legalizing marijuana – comparing it to watching a bad car accident happening all over again
- Rates of arrest & incarceration for members of minority communities have not declined where legalized
- Pot industry targets minorities, in Denver one pot business for every 47 residents
- African Americans twice as likely to be arrested for pot in CO. & WA both have legalized recreational use & sales.
- In CO. household income below \$25K had nearly 2X the use rate of higher income earners
- Vast majority of legal pot businesses are owned by wealthy whites
- 70% of CO. weed shops recommended pot for pregnant women – 28% tested positive during pregnancy
- In 1995 marijuana was 4% THC vs. Today's marijuana is 99% THC
- In Denver CO there are more pot shops than McDonalds & Starbucks COMBINED
- In CO drugged driving went from killing roughly one person every 6.5 days to 2.5 days since legalization was passed
- The following agencies believe marijuana is addictive & harmful: World Health organization, National Academy of Sciences, National Institutes of Health, American Society for Addiction Medicine, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry

Chairman Lopez asked if there was any other business, and hearing none;

## Adjournment

**Motion Made By:** Legislator Petit  
**Motion Seconded By:** Legislator Nolan  
**No. of Votes in Favor:** 5  
**No. of Votes Against:** 0

**TIME:** 6:20 PM

Respectfully submitted: Nettie Tomshaw, Legislative Staff  
Minutes Approved: June 3, 2019



# Decriminalize. Don't Legalize.

## SMART APPROACHES TO MARIJUANA - NEW YORK (SAM-NY)

**A Coalition of Businesses, Healthcare Professionals, Law Enforcement, and Parents to Protect New York Communities**

SAM-NY is a coalition of associations and individuals who believe that the health, safety, and economic harms of marijuana legalization far outweigh any perceived benefits. We are medical doctors, employers, treatment providers, drug prevention professionals, business owners, employees, law enforcement officers, and parents who believe that marijuana policies should be aligned with the scientific understanding of marijuana's harms, and that New York communities should not be victims of the commercialization and normalization of marijuana.

Visit [www.sam-ny.org](http://www.sam-ny.org) for more information!

## Social Justice

Colorado's marijuana arrest rate for African Americans (**233 per 100,000**) was nearly double that of Caucasians (**118 per 100,000**) in 2017.

*(Colorado Department of Public Safety, March 2018).*

## Unsafe Workplaces

Quest Diagnostics, which analyzes the results of millions of workplace drug tests each year, recently reported a **47%** spike in the rate of positive oral marijuana tests from 2013-2015. More detailed data shows an **incredible 178% rise in the marijuana positivity rate from 2011 to 2015.**

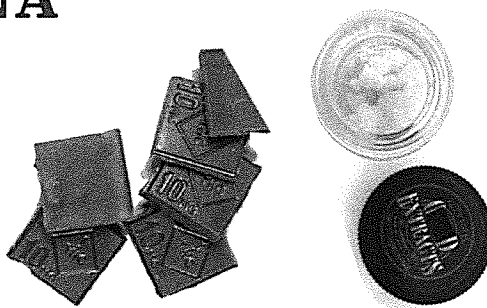
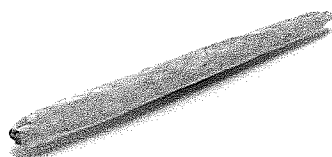
*(Quest Diagnostics, 2015).*

## Legalization Costs

Legal substances cost \$10 for every \$1 in revenue brought in by government. In legalized states, revenues do not pay for the treatment costs, let alone the costs due to car crashes and other negative impacts.

*(<https://learnaboutsam.org/costs>)*

## TODAY'S MARIJUANA



**1995 - 4% THC**

**NOW - 99% THC**

**1**

### PUBLIC SAFETY

The percentage of Washington state traffic fatalities where the driver tested positive for recent pot use **more than doubled the year legal pot sales began.**

*(WA Traffic Commission, 2018)*

**2**

### HEALTH

Hospitalizations related to marijuana have **increased 70% since legalization** in Colorado.

*(Colorado Hospital Assn/Colorado Dept. of Public Safety, 2016)*

**3**

### YOUTH USE

Colorado youth marijuana use **increased 5%** on average from 2014-2017 while national use decreased.

*(National Survey of Drug Use and Health, State Estimates, 2017)*

Visit [www.SAM-NY.org](http://www.SAM-NY.org) for more information

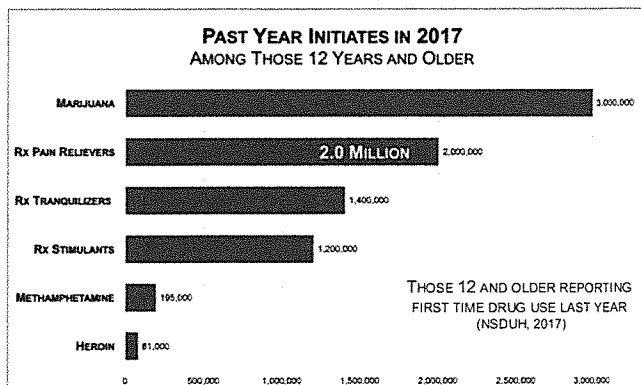
# MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION: QUICK FACTS

## MARIJUANA IS ADDICTIVE & HARMFUL

ENDORSED BY:

- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (2016)<sup>1</sup>
- NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES (2017)<sup>2</sup>
- NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
- AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR ADDICTION MEDICINE
- AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
- AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS
- AMERICAN ACADEMY OF CHILD ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

IN 2017 THERE WERE 8,300 NEW MARIJUANA USERS EACH DAY; ROUGHLY 1,200 MORE THAN THERE WERE IN 2016.<sup>3</sup>

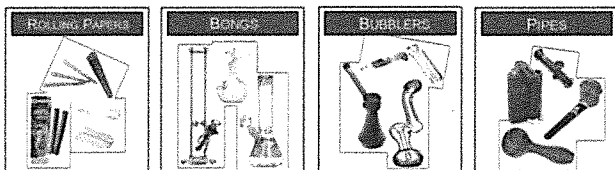


Regular use of marijuana is linked with increased risk of developing cannabis use disorder, higher rates of mental illness and higher rates of co-substance abuse with alcohol, among other drugs<sup>4</sup>.

THERE ARE 2X AS MANY DAILY OR NEAR DAILY MARIJUANA USERS THAN THERE WERE JUST A DECADE AGO.<sup>3</sup>

### NOT THIS...

-5-25%  
THC

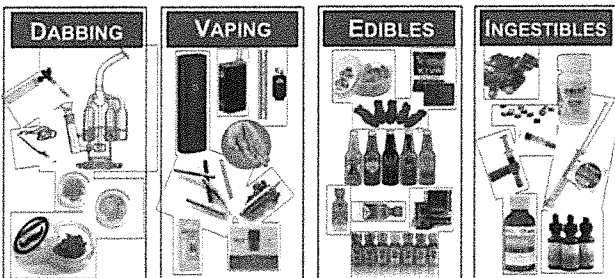


## NOT YOUR WOODSTOCK WEED

A STUDY ON THE WASHINGTON MARKET SHOWED AVERAGE THC LEVELS OF 20% IN FLOWER PRODUCTS AND 70% IN EXTRACTS FOR INHALATION IN 2016.<sup>7</sup>

### BUT THIS...

~20-95%  
THC



*"Epidemiological studies have clearly established that acute cannabis impairment increases the risk of motor vehicle accident involvement, including fatal collisions."*

-AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, 2017

IN COLORADO, DRUGGED DRIVING WENT FROM KILLING ROUGHLY ONE PERSON EVERY 6.5 DAYS TO NOW EVERY 2.5 DAYS, SINCE LEGALIZATION WAS PASSED.<sup>8</sup>

#### REFERENCES

- World Health Organization. (2016). The health and social effects of nonmedical cannabis use. Retrieved October 2, 2018, from [http://www.who.int/substance\\_abuse/publications/cannabis\\_report/en/](http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/cannabis_report/en/)
- The National Academies of Sciences. (2017, January). The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research. Retrieved October 2, 2018, from <http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2017/Health-Effects-of-Cannabis-and-Cannabinoids.aspx>
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# Revenue v\$ REALITY

THE MARIJUANA INDUSTRY wants elected officials to believe that tax revenue will leave states and local governments flush with cash. It's a lie. Revenues in legalized states often fall short of what was promised and only amount to a drop in the bucket. Estimates nearly always ignore the **SIGNIFICANT FISCAL COSTS** of legalization in terms of social services like healthcare and addiction treatment, law enforcement and economic impacts. Of the six states for which we have data as of January 2019, four of them (CO, WA, CA, and AK) missed initial revenue targets.

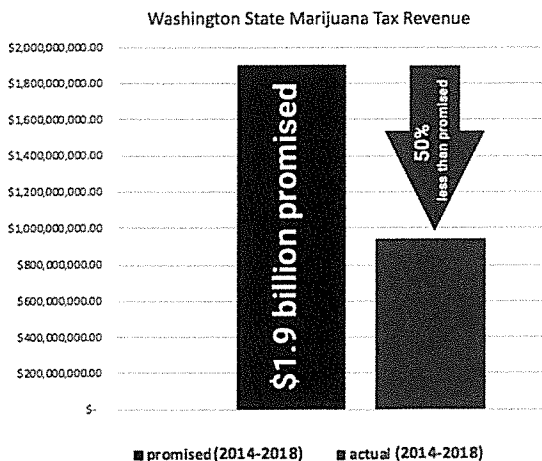
Smart Approaches to Marijuana (SAM) has developed a series of cost studies in states that are considering legalization. The results show societal and fiscal costs far outweigh projected marijuana tax revenues. State and local governments – and taxpayers – will foot the bill for increased drug use. Additionally there will be little to no money for low-income and minority communities in New York from legalization.

"You do not legalize for taxation. It is a myth. You are not going to pave streets. You are not going to be able to pay teachers."  
- *Andrew Freedman, former Colorado Pot Czar*

STATE	PROJ. REVENUE	PROJ. COSTS
Rhode Island	\$48	\$61
Connecticut	\$180	\$216
Illinois	\$566	\$670

(IN MILLIONS OF \$\$)

"...it's a drop in the bucket – it's not going to pay for early childhood education or solve any big social ill..."  
- *Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, 4.9.2018*



## Marijuana Taxes as a Percent of State Budgets

State	Percent of Budget
Colorado	0.78%
Washington	0.30%
Oregon	0.24%
Alaska	0.12%
California	0.20%
<b>NEW YORK</b>	<b>0.17%</b>



# Legal Weed **IS NOT** Social Justice

**DECRIMINALIZE  
DON'T  
LEGALIZE**



The pot industry is targeting minorities,  
much like Big Tobacco.

In Denver, one minority neighborhood has

**ONE POT BUSINESS  
FOR EVERY 47 RESIDENTS**

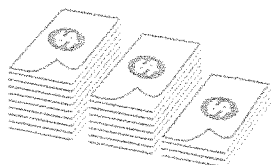
(Denver Post)



African Americans are  
**TWICE AS LIKELY**

to be arrested for pot in CO  
and WA, both states that have  
**legalized recreational use and sales.**

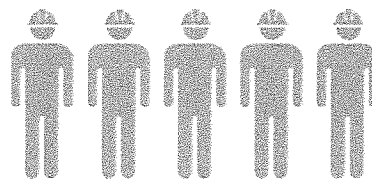
(CJCJ)



In CO, those with a household income  
below \$25,000 had nearly

**2X THE USE RATE**  
of higher income earners.

(CDPS, 2016)



**63%**

of African American  
workers surveyed  
work in a profession  
where they will be drug  
tested, compared to  
**46% of white workers.**

(Yale University)

**Vast majority of legal pot businesses  
ARE OWNED BY WEALTHY WHITES**

**28%**

of women living in  
low-income areas  
tested positive for  
**MARIJUANA USE  
DURING PREGNANCY**

(Foeller & Lyell, 2017)

**70%**

of CO weed shops  
**RECOMMENDED POT  
FOR PREGNANT WOMEN,**  
despite the documented harm



To learn more about our decriminalization proposal visit  
[learnaboutsam.org/sam-model-state-legalization](http://learnaboutsam.org/sam-model-state-legalization)

The marijuana industry and its boosters have been actively advertising marijuana as a solution for the opioid epidemic; they claim that marijuana is an effective substitute for opioids in pain management and have even gone on to say marijuana can be used as a treatment for opioid use disorder.

A deeper look at the scientific literature reveals that those who use marijuana are at much higher risk for developing opioid use disorders and that population studies claiming a correlation between state marijuana legalization and reduced opioid deaths have serious deficiencies. Better studies are now showing marijuana is a risk factor in the increased non-medical use of opioids.

## "The opioid crisis appears to be worsening where marijuana has been legalized."

- JAMA INTERNATIONAL MEDICINE JOURNAL, 2018<sup>1</sup>

### LATEST RESEARCH ON MARIJUANA & OPIOIDS

#### MARIJUANA HAS HAD NO IMPACT ON OPIOID PRESCRIPTIONS OR REDUCED PRESCRIBING.

THE LANCET JOURNAL, 2018<sup>4</sup>

A 4-year prospective study followed medical marijuana patients with a dual opioid prescription and found that marijuana use had no positive impact on opioid use or reduced prescribing.

Further, they found that cannabis users were more likely to rate cannabis as means of effective pain relief; however, other self-reported pain measures indicated the opposite. Users reported greater pain severity and more day-to-day interference than those that did not use marijuana.

#### MARIJUANA USERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO ABUSE PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY, 2017<sup>5</sup>

Over 30,000 American adults were sampled and researchers found that marijuana users were more than twice as likely to move on to abuse prescription opioids – even when controlling for age, sex, race/ethnicity, other substance use disorders, any mood or anxiety disorder, prior nonmedical opioid use, and family history of drug use disorder, alcohol use disorder, depression, and antisocial personality disorder.

#### MARIJUANA USE CAN DECREASE PAIN THRESHOLDS, REQUIRING MORE MEDICATION.

PATIENT SAFETY IN SURGERY, 2018<sup>6</sup>

Researchers found that patients reporting marijuana use actually experienced *more* pain on average when admitted to the hospital following a traumatic injury than those that did not. Compared to non-users, they required more opioid medication to cope with the pain and consistently rated their pain higher during the duration of their stay.

#### MARIJUANA IS OFTEN USED WITH OTHER SUBSTANCES.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY, 2014<sup>7</sup>

Regular use of marijuana is linked with increased risk of developing cannabis use disorder, higher rates of mental illness and higher rates of co-substance abuse with alcohol, among other drugs.

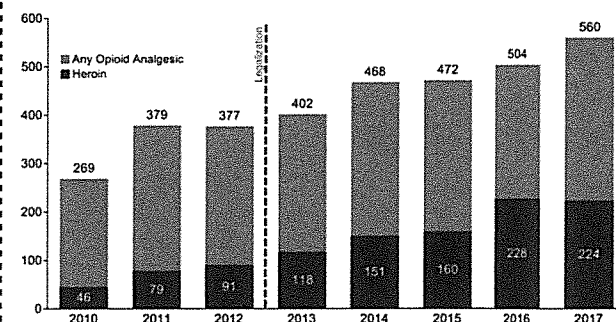
"THERE IS MODERATE EVIDENCE OF A STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION BETWEEN CANNABIS USE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUBSTANCE DEPENDENCE AND/OR A SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDER FOR SUBSTANCES INCLUDING ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER ILLICIT DRUGS."

- NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCE (2017)<sup>2</sup>

"[W]E RECOMMEND AVOIDING MEDICAL MARIJUANA CERTIFICATION IN A PATIENT PRESCRIBED HIGH-DOSE OPIOIDS. GIVEN THE DEARTH OF EVIDENCE FOR LONG-TERM OPIOID THERAPY FOR CHRONIC PAIN, ADDING MORE UNCERTAINTY WITH MARIJUANA SEEMS UNWISE."

- MAYO CLINIC (2016)<sup>3</sup>

### OPIOID OVERDOSE FATALITIES HAVE INCREASED IN COLORADO SINCE LEGALIZATION.<sup>8</sup>



Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, 2018

"[P]RESCRIPTION OPIOIDS WERE SEEN AS A WONDER DRUG, ESPECIALLY FOR PAIN MANAGEMENT."

"WE SHOULD NOT REPEAT HISTORY WITH YET ANOTHER WONDER DRUG INSTALLED BEFORE PROPER EVIDENCE."

- ADDICTION, 2018<sup>9</sup>

#### REFERENCES

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- Hasin, D. S., Kerridge, B. T., Saha, T. D., Huang, B., Pickering, R., Smith, S. M., ... & Grant, B. F. (2016). Prevalence and correlates of DSM-5 cannabis use disorder, 2012-2013: findings from the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions-III. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 173(6), 588-599.
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# THE BUFFALO NEWS

Another Voice: Big money is behind the rush for marijuana legalization  
**By Kevin Sabet** | *Published February 16, 2019*

Since Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo flip-flopped on recreational marijuana the issue of legalization has gained an unfortunate air of inevitability. This perception has spurred Wall Street investors to dive in and brought cheers from pro-pot advocates who claim legal weed is a major step for social justice.

As the volume has risen on commercialization, rhetoric, even from staunchly pro-pot advocates like Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes, has begun to acknowledge that rushing this policy shift may come with major consequences. One of the chief reasons is that it's becoming increasingly clear that legal weed isn't about social justice. It's about money, with Big Tobacco investing billions to profit off another harmful substance.

Multi-national players are rushing to corner New York's market. City & State NY recently detailed how Constellation Brands, a business based in Victor, Ontario County, spent \$4 billion to purchase a major share of Canopy Growth, a Canadian-based marijuana company. The transaction was quickly followed by an announcement that state grants would help fund a hemp processing facility in nearby Binghamton.

## ADVERTISEMENT

Locally, Flora California Prime Inc., run by Brad Termini, the son of Buffalo developer Rocco Termini, has secured an agreement to purchase 72 acres from the Buffalo Urban Development Corp., a government-affiliated nonprofit, to establish a growing and processing operation on the city's waterfront. Like others moving into the recreational pot field, the Terminis are well-heeled donors to Gov. Cuomo and other local officials.

Legislators could soon even vote to approve commercialization against the recommendations of the New York State PTA, the Medical Society, law enforcement groups and others.

Many legislators – keying in on the social justice rationale – have seen legalization as a solution to a justice system that doesn't treat all defendants equally.

Commercialization won't solve that problem.

No state that has legalized pot has seen a reduction in prison populations. As it stands, only 3 percent of the nation's prison population is made up of individuals with marijuana-related offenses – the majority having been convicted of trafficking the drug, often in large quantities.

# Newsday

## **False promises about legalized weed**

New York has time to avoid the mistakes by other states that made the drug legal.



Different strands of marijuana are displayed on a table at the MedMen dispensary in West Hollywood, California on Jan. 2, 2018. Photo Credit: Bloomberg/Patrick T. Fallon

**Updated February 28, 2019 6:00 AM**

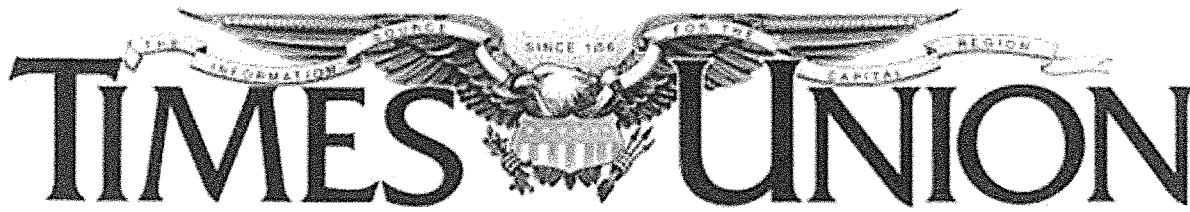
The rush to legalize and commercialize marijuana has many elected officials making claims that the facts don't back up. This unrealistic view of legal weed is the result of an orchestrated information campaign by activists and lobbyists tied to a growing industry that parallels Big Tobacco. In fact, Altria, the owner of Marlboro, has invested more than \$1 billion in Big Pot.

If we did our homework on what happens when you legalize today's pot, which is many times more potent than the weed of Woodstock, we would find out that the results don't match anything like the rosy promises made by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and industry leaders.

We've been told that we should commercialize weed because it will lower incarceration rates, reduce crime, produce millions of dollars (or even billions) in tax revenue and improve economic opportunity, especially for minority and lower-income populations. We've been told pot is not a gateway drug, and that negative impacts on physical or mental health are outweighed by the positives.

All of those assertions fly in the face of science and the experiences of other states that turned weed into a big business.

Looking to states that legalized pot, we see the social justice argument doesn't hold water. African-Americans are twice as likely to be arrested for marijuana in Colorado and Washington. In Denver, weed stores are clustered in minority neighborhoods in much the same way that liquor stores zone- in on low-income areas.



## **Commentary: Legalizing marijuana will imperil everyone**

By Kevin Sabet

Published 10:01 pm EST, Tuesday, March 5, 2019

I'm sure by now you've heard the line, "Marijuana doesn't kill anyone. It's much safer than alcohol." It's a popular refrain for pro-pot pushers who want you to believe the drug they want to commercialize is harmless.

Don't tell that to Corinne Gasper of Ohio, whose daughter, Jennifer, was on the way to work when she was hit by another driver who ran a red light. That driver, who consumed pot legally purchased in Michigan and then traveled across the border, collided with Jennifer's car at more than 80 miles an hour. Don't give that line to Darryl Rogers of North Carolina either; his son, Chase, was riding in a car driven by a woman with marijuana in her system when it crashed, killing him.

Since legalization was passed in Colorado, drugged driving rates have more than doubled, going from killing one person every 6.5 days to every 2.5 days. A nationwide report issued last year found that 40 percent of driver fatalities who were tested for drugs tested positive for some form of marijuana.

Marijuana's impact is often downplayed by advocates who wish to turn New York into a weed paradise.

There are plenty of myths and stark realities surrounding legal weed that need to be understood before New York rushes to legalize. Big Marijuana has taken the playbook direct from Big Tobacco in order to sell a product that is harmful to everyone.

For starters, today's marijuana isn't your Woodstock weed. Potency can reach up to 99.9 percent — more than 20 times the strength of marijuana from the 1970s. THC-based gummies, candies and sodas are colorful and marketed to attract young eyes.

It's working. According to a 2018 survey compiled by researchers at the University of Michigan and funded by the National Institutes of Health, marijuana use is up significantly, with vaping of the drug up 63 percent for eighth- and 10th-graders and 53 percent for 12th-graders. This is particularly dangerous as use of the drug at a young age has been medically proven to have long-term cognitive and psychological impacts.

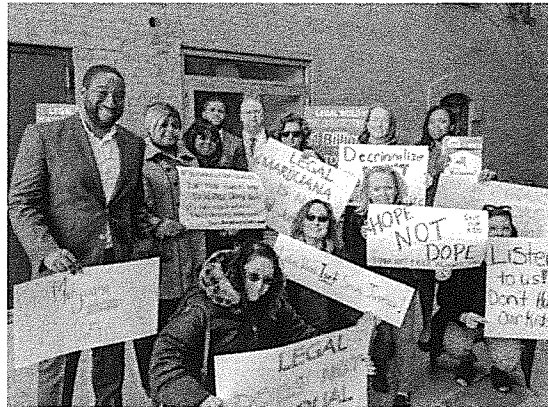
# YONKERS TIMES

News in Yonkers and around Westchester

## OPPONENTS OF LEGAL POT SALES GAIN MOMENTUM

April 5, 2019

By Dan Murphy



*Protesters outside State Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins' Yonkers office who oppose the legalization of marijuana, including republican former candidates for State Senate Julie Killian and Assembly candidate Joe Pinion.*

Opposition in Westchester County to legalizing the sale of marijuana, if New York State opens the door to do so by passing a “pot law” this spring, has gained momentum, with a number of local governments and organizations warning against the opening of dispensaries in the county. If Gov. Andrew Cuomo and a majority of state legislators in the Assembly and Senate vote to legalize pot, the decision that local and county governments will have to make is whether to permit the sale of marijuana in their communities.

State Sen. Peter Harckham held a public forum in Mahopac last month, in which northern Westchester and Putnam County residents were split on whether Westchester or Putnam should “opt-out” of permitting the sale of marijuana in their communities.

In attendance advocating for the legalization of marijuana were leaders from the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, whose Hudson Valley Chapter President Roger Green said that in the ten states that have legalized pot, there has been no significant increase in drug use by minors. Another positive development with legalizing marijuana in New York, Green said, is that other, more dangerous forms of marijuana – like synthetic pot – could be outlawed.

Another argument in favor of legalizing marijuana is that if pot were legal in neighboring states, then New York residents would drive to that state to purchase pot, with New York not receiving any taxes or fees from it. In November 2018, the first recreational marijuana stores in Massachusetts began legally selling marijuana, and while it is not legal to purchase and transport marijuana from Massachusetts to New York, it is now a common practice.

But opposition to legalizing marijuana and permitting its sale was expressed by several at the forum. The Harris Project, founded by Stephanie Marquesano, who lost her 19-year-old son Harris to drug abuse and mental health, said that marijuana poses a danger to young adults under the age of 25, and asked state legislators to slow down before passing any laws.

# LI HERALD

## ROCKVILLE CENTRE

### Activists in Rockville Centre urge lawmakers to keep marijuana legalization out of the state budget

ROCKVILLE CENTRE HERALD

Posted March 28, 2019

By Ben Strack



*Rockville Centre resident Liz Boylan, alongside Assemblywoman Jaime Williams, left, and Abu Edwards, director of state affairs for Smart Approaches to Marijuana, spoke out against legalizing recreational marijuana in New York. (Photo: Ben Strack)*

A week before the April 1 deadline to finalize the state budget, elected officials joined concerned citizens in an effort to slow down the potential legalization of recreational marijuana in New York.

Smart Approaches to Marijuana, or SAM, hosted the March 22 news conference on Front Street in Rockville Centre. The alliance of organizations and professionals is dedicated to a health-first approach to marijuana policy, and seek “a middle road between incarceration and legalization,” according to SAM’s website.

“Let’s slow this train down,” said Abu Edwards, SAM’s director of state affairs. “Let’s sit at the table and let’s have important conversation about the legalization of recreational marijuana in New York.”

Though Gov. Andrew Cuomo proposed earlier this year to legalize and tax recreational marijuana, Assemblywoman Judy Griffin, a Democrat from Rockville Centre, said at the news conference that the measure was presently out of the state budget. “I don’t know if that’s going to change, but I feel this is an issue that needs comprehensive study,” she said, noting that legalizing marijuana could negatively affect road safety and mental health.

New York would become the 11th state to legalize recreational marijuana. The consumption of medical marijuana has been legal in the state since 2014.

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# Union-Sun & Journal

## MAHONEY: State's pot push could go up in smoke

Apr 7, 2019

Joe Mahoney

ALBANY — Gov. Andrew Cuomo ushered in 2019 by decrying marijuana prohibition, saying it has led to numerous "needless and unjust convictions," and vowing he would be the one to drive through legalization, making that a goal he'd fulfill in the first 100 days of this year.

It hasn't happened.

The top Democrat in a statehouse where his party rules both legislative chambers, Cuomo went into the budget negotiations holding a straight flush. Rank and file lawmakers were eager for an on-time budget so they could lock in the hefty pay raises awarded to them by a compensation commission.

So getting a timely budget was in the cards. Marijuana legalization, despite public opinion polls showing it is backed by more than 60 percent of voters, was not.

Interested parties at the statehouse tell me they wonder if Cuomo was ever determined to bring about legalization this year. They point to the fact that he used his political strength to drive through very complicated legislation clamping new tolls on motorists entering the central part of Manhattan. The toll proposal, known as congestion pricing, was an idea that had significant suburban opposition.

But it survived the budget talks. Marijuana did not. And it may not happen at all this year, with some proponents of the idea acknowledging that the best time to deal with something as controversial as this is in the process of hashing out a spending plan. What the Albany sausage factory produced was notable -- an historic raise for Cuomo, whose pay goes up 39 percent by 2021, with an anti-climax of rising acrimony between progressive legislative newbies and machine Democrats who march in step with party bosses.

After raising expectations on the marijuana front, and then getting clotheslined as he scampered towards the end zone, Cuomo has left county governments wondering what his next move will be. There is still time on the clock, until June 19, when the 2019 legislative session is slated to end.

But leaders of several New York's county governments outside New York City, Nassau, Suffolk, Putnam and Rockland, have signaled they plan to opt out of a state-run legal marijuana program. Possession would be allowed statewide, but sales could only take place in the counties that opt in.

Other counties are biding the time as the post-budget dust settles. "We are weighing our options and waiting to see where the state is on this," Keith McNall, chairman of the



## Nassau Lawmakers Vote To Opt Out If Pot Sales Legalized

By Zak Failla

Published April 23, 2019

Legalized marijuana may be coming to New York, but Nassau County lawmakers will be opting out if it does.

On Monday, the full legislature voted against the sale of legalized marijuana within county lines if measures are passed to legalize it statewide. The vote was unanimous.

The announcement comes in the wake of a new report stating that New Yorkers have been flocking to New England states such as Massachusetts - where marijuana has been legalized - to purchase products.

Marijuana is currently legal in Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont.

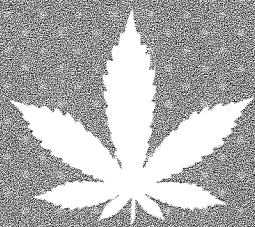
New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo has been pushing for marijuana legalization - even vowing to have it passed by the summer - though the recently approved state budget failed to include such legislature.

Cuomo has said that "in concept, we have an agreement; but that is all about the devil in the details. And that is going to take more time to work out." He and New York lawmakers are expected to begin negotiations later this month.

Smart Approaches to Marijuana New York CEO and former drug policy advisor to President Obama, Kevin Sabet issued a statement on the Nassau County Legislature's unanimous vote to ban the sale of commercial marijuana in Nassau County.

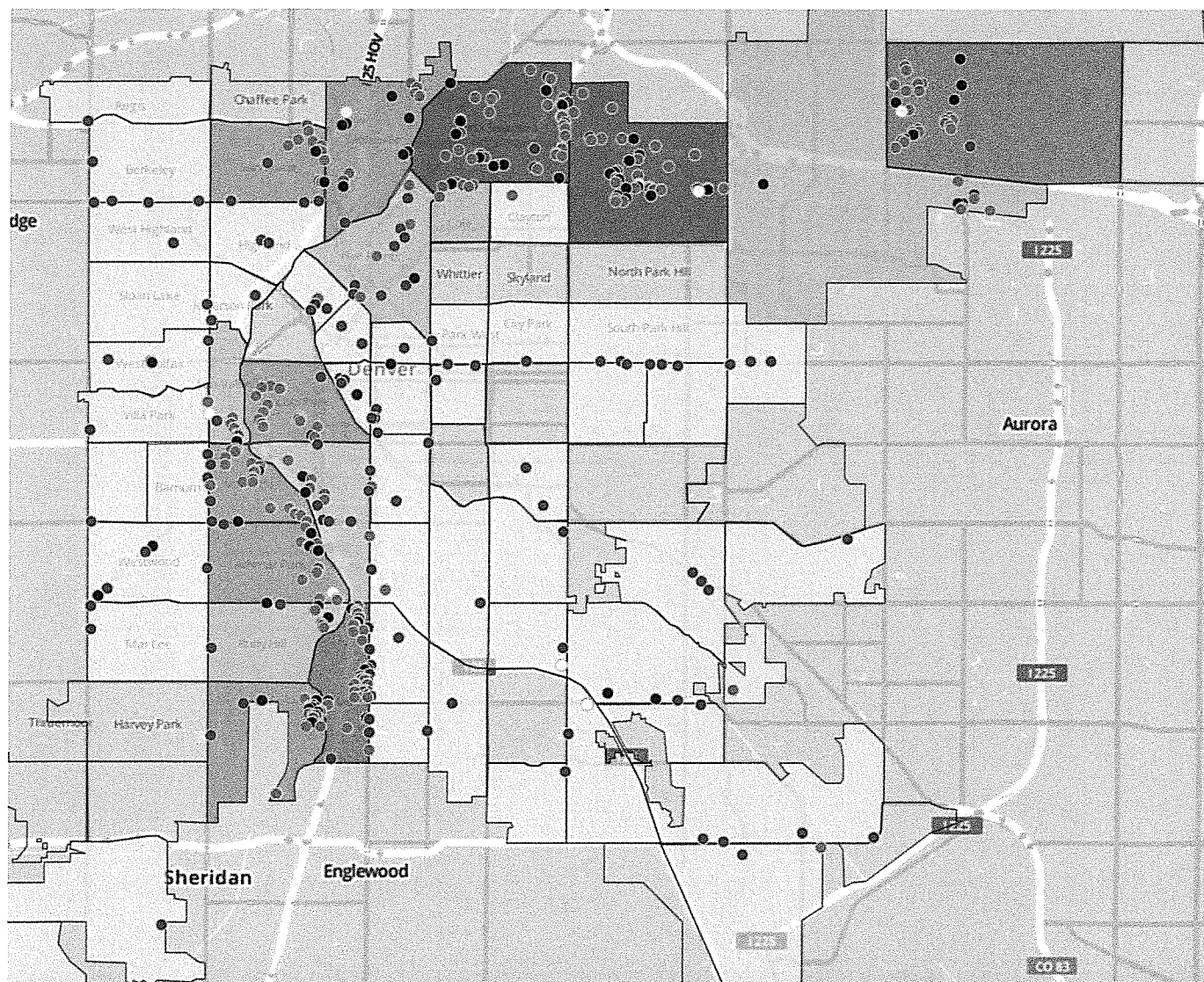
"We applaud the Nassau County Legislature's courageous stance against the sale of commercial pot because it will protect public health and safety," Sabet said. "Now the county's representatives in Albany should follow suit and publicly reject the state's push to bring another dangerous, mind-altering product to market.

"The sale of commercial pot isn't a boon for tax revenue or those seeking social justice. It has been proven to drive up costs for county taxpayers and businesses who are left to shoulder the higher law enforcement, social services and public health costs. Nassau's parents, doctors, addiction professionals and community leaders have all been steadfast in their opposition.



# Legal Weed **IS NOT** Social Justice

DECRIMINALIZE  
**DON'T**  
LEGALIZE



## Big Pot is Targeting Minority Communities:

Blue Dots Indicate Pot Shops in Denver

Dark-Shaded Areas Denote Low-Income, Minority Neighborhoods

**In Denver CO, there are more pot shops than  
McDonalds and Starbucks COMBINED**